

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

MisingOnline.com celebrating two years of its existence

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from the editor's Desk

from the editor's Desk

Today's generation is the generation of Facebook, Twitter, Orkut, Gmail and other networking sites. The world which was already shrinking has shrunk a lot more because of these sites and people today are sharing ideas and knowledge more and more. It has revolutionized the way people communicate with each other. One very important feature of it is that it has given visibility to a lot of issues which were otherwise not talked about. So what does internet mean for the Mising community with only about 1.2 million people, with most of them still struggling to get basic education, leave alone internet use?

The Mising community resides in the most flood affected zones of Assam which have pushed them towards more and more poverty and vulnerability. But still the community has struggled a lot and considerable section of the youth has moved out and gained education. This new breed of the youth are conscious, actively interested in bringing about a positive change in the community. Thus, misingonline.com was conceptualized and founded on this day; two years back with objectives of being a platform for getting together, sharing ideas and also discussing about the issues of the community. Since then the journey has continued. Today MO has more than 300 sign ups and has more than 200 blogs. But this is just the beginning and the road is still long.

Misingonline has also been a part of gripping debates and have also run a series of interviews of prominent personalities of the Mising community. It is soon becoming a web resource archive of the community. Today it has proudly completed its second year of existence.

Thus, this e-souvenir is to mark its 2nd Birthday. It is a compilation of interviews, blogs and poetries which have been published as blog in our website. Through this souvenir, we would like to request everyone to keep participating actively in the forum and help us make this a more and more vibrant platform.

*Manoranjan Pegu
On Behalf of the MisingOnline team*

**DON'T RAPE OUR MOTHER OBONORI:
MISING BA:NE KÉBANG TELLS JAIRAM
RAMESH**

-Mg. Bhaskar Gupid

The apex Mising body Mising Ba:ne Kebang have expressed strong reservation against the building of mega dam over Obonori (Subansiri) river. Paramananda Chayenga, the President of MBK submitted a memorandum to Union Forest and Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh in a consultative meeting on big river dams with civil society, NGOs, social organizations.

The MBK told the Union Minister that ninety percent people of the would be affected of the mega dam due to Lower Subansiri Hydel Project (LSHP) belongs to the Mising tribe; being a riverine community. The MBK added that Subansiri is known as Obonori Ané in Mising language and it is a matter of great importance since the entire civilization, livelihood issues, cultural and religious ethos of the tribe are involved. Expressing strong sentiment against the LSHP the MBK said that Obonori is regarded as Mother by the Misings and alleged that the hydel developers are raping their dear mother.

Jonai legislator Bhuban Pegu also expressed his concern on the mega dams over Siang river that there was no any embankments and protection mechanism in the Siang belt. Leaders from various organisations like TMPK, MMK, AASU, KMSS, Adisu and other resistance groups from Assam and Arunachal Pradesh were present in the consultative meeting.

**REMEMBERING THE NIGHT OF 22ND
AUGUST, 1950**

-Mg. Uttam Pegu

No, I was not born on that day.....

But, 15 August 1950 and night of 22 August 1950 will never go away from memory of survivors of Ukhamati village, Gogamukh. The earthquake measuring 8.6 (recalculated now) has caused so much landslide that it blocked Abonori (Subansiri) river creating an artificial dam. People from our village, Ukhamati left immediately after the earth quake as it was announced on radio that Abonori has been blocked and at any time, it may break the artificial dam and flood downstream. But nothing happened for next few days.

So, they had started coming back after 3/4 days one by one and had heartily feasted on the fish on Abonori river as it dried up. And after 7 days from the earthquake, on the night of 22 August 1950, the artificial dam was broken by swelling Abonori which created flood wave of more than 25 feet!

It changed the course of Abonori forever. So did it 25 families of Ukhamati who had resettled themselves in Pathali Pam, now known as Ukhamati Village in Gogamukh

I remember the stories from my father and other elders in our village. I also salute the person who saved our family on that night after braving 25 feet flood water with fast current using a Mising boat. We will be in eternal debt to him.

Incidentally, NHPC is building a dam on the same location where Abonori was once blocked by landslides from earth quake. So, may be the time has me again for the people of Ukhamati to brace for nature's fury in case the dam is broken, this time by another earth quake with value of 8.6 in the Richter scale!

IKI:LOKKÉ A:RÉNGÉ KAPILA KAMAN?

- Mg. Bhaigeswar Pogag

To:di ya:mo do:yíngé.Ta:to Me:kam bí ngolum Yí:lé po:lo dok do:ré:né yumékolo sé do:yi:sém Béláng aye dododém kíbítágai. Do:yi:dé sémpé-To:di ya:molo sé mo:písok ísing-íling tabu:ngé agom lukin-pokin dungngai.Édémí:pé Éki pérogété agom ludungai.Lekkem Kékar Mo:yíng émko amo:to Iki: adorko dungngai.Édé Iki:dé Éngo-Takar amo:tokké togdagém amo:so:pé a:mém gébomtagai.Odok po:pé tani: amo:so a:mé kamangai.Bí a:mém géyi:bomnam légapé, bí pémiégém aipe mé:bodungai.

Longékolo bí pémiégém dopé émna ki:pardok aru:do tunga:la yaggo yaggo:la du:dom bíkké mittubdok a:ré:ng dokki kéigbok du:né pémiék kidardém dola:tomang.Édémála bí mé:ngkang -ngok a:ré:si du:la:rung asin mé:ngkampé pémiégém dolama:pé idung.‘Du:potok ,a:ré sim tuyuksula lé:popé émna luge:la a:ré:dém ringka:suto odokké tolo bolopé ka:ngosuto.Okolosin sékomsin ka:begma:la aipé asé:la a:réngém tuyuksuto.Odokké pémiégém dobomkang. Popé Sobennokké a:réngé kamangai.Édémála bí aipé mé:dir dungai.Édé longngardo Soben bí:sin Iki:dok a:réng tuyuksunamdém ka:pa:suto.Bí mé:ngkang supak Iki:ké ka:ma:ngo:pé po:bompé kupé lagiye.Iki:bí supak okkomsin kinsumang.Iki:dé kensu pasumapé pémiégém arung ara:do pidala domotsula du:dom Sobendé bíkké a:ré:dém dopsola bomkangu odokké mittubdo pítlíksuge:la segola dungngai.Odo bégimpé Iki:dé a:ré:dok agomém mé:beksuto odokké tu:sa:sula ka:toném ki:réngém ka:beksutokumang.Bí péki-péya:pé ka:nggo:toném Sobenmé ka:pa:suto.Sobenké tukkudo íngkolok ki:réngé lenkan émna bí méngkang..Bíkké so:ré:ngé kamangai.Ma,Ngokké a:réngngí:dém rakutung.Odo Iki:dé Sobendém ménbomna gikang.Émdaggom Sobendé ki:ré:dém bílatokumang.Édé longédokké Sobenbé a:réng kakang odokké Iki:lokké a:réng katokumang.Édémála su:sin Iki:é Sobeném ka:míloi gampé émna ménbomdak.

Émpála su:sin bíkké a:ré:dém pa:yeikuson émna Iki:é kipurém yaggodag

TEN MOST IMPORTANT THINGS FOR THE MISINGS IN THE BY-GONE DECADE

Mg. Bhaskar Gupid

I must owe this writing to The New York Times (NYT) which inspired me to think about the by-gone decade although in "narrow" sense. While the NYT had wrote 10 things about America and the world I'm writing about a community of people of round 12 lakhs people! I outline the following which I feel that every Mising must remember from the first decade of the 21st century that has touched the people lives.

- 1) **Sixth Schedule:** If any Mising is quizzed about the Indian constitution, the most familiar term for him is "Sixth Schedule". The Sixth Schedule movement was the most popularly participated movement in the first decade of twenty first century. One Mising may not comprehend what Sixth Schedule is for but it is a democratic struggle for self-determination by Misings.
- 2) **Pahariya Miri Remark:** In the wake of popular movement for Sixth Schedule, plain and mainstream Assamese media and organisations claimed infamously that Mising are not real residents of the state rather they are migrated hill community or 'Pahariya Miri' and they have no right to demand Sixth Schedule in June 2004. This ridiculed the propaganda called "Greater Assamese Nationality" led by some intellectuals.
- 3) **Dhemaji Blast:** This was a brutal attack that shook the globally which was condemned by world leaders on India's Independence Day celebrations. The Dhemaji blasts have gone down in the Indian history as a black chapter. This unfortunate event will be remembered by the Misings because it happened in core inhabited area at the peak of autonomy movement.
- 4) **Bogibeel Bridge:** The Bridge is a longstanding need to enhanced communication and development in Tani belts in north bank of Brahmaputra. The rail cum road bridge at Bogibeel is slated to be completed by 2014. The national project is a story of mixed blessings. Bogibeel find names in rhythm of many Oi: Nitoms from pangs of love, hope and despair notwithstanding displacement of Mising tribals and rag to riches story.
- 5) **LHSEP, Gerukamukh:** The state run National Hydro Electric Power Corporation (NHPC) in their operation of works at Lower Subansiri Hydel Project in Tani inhabited Gerukamukh has been facing stiff opposition from Takam Mising Porin Ke'bang (TMPK) on the ground of the corporate's improper assessment in the downstream areas. This hydel project is harboring jobs for locals on the other hand. But, the decade of 21st century beginning has become a question of life and death for Misings due to the project. The 2000 MW hydel project is to be commissioned from 2012, which will be largest one in India in operation that would provide an impetus to deciding decade from developing to developed India.
- 6) **Matmara's Geotube Tech Embankment:** Misings face the most ravaged natural disaster in the form of floods annually turning to them Mother Nature's induced displaced persons just short of war refugee. The 142 crores sanctioned from Asian Development Bank at Matmara came to rescue the hapless tribals by providing the latest modernized technology contracted to a Malaysian company Emaskiera second in the world after Florida (US) with geotube techs as embankment to saved the fertile agro land turned sand beach. It's a matter of time to determine the efficacy of the geotube embankment. The multi-crores project has led locals to work but never will assist the rickshaw pullers and security guards to return in the land dear. The 142 crores embankment will be finished by 2010, March.
- 7) **Christian Conversion in Majuli:** The Christian conversion in Majuli isle of Misings caught the eye of national and international media. In the wake natural disaster induced poverty to Misings, Christian Missionaries came forward to hug this tribal people with humanitarian aids as well as conversion of faith that throw many debates. This chapter caught the sentiments if right wing Hindus which speak of double standard in their treatment meted to Mising tribals. The decade saw a transitional period in religious sphere in Majuli among Mising in the river island.
- 8) **Ali-aye-Ligang Blast 2008:** The mindless assault on the cultural nite celebration of Li'gang in Murkongselek Kristi Bhavan in Jonai spoke of cultural autonomy enjoyed by Misings inhabiting in Assam. The bomb blast was a saddest chapter in the cultural history of the Misings whereas the perpetrators were never traced by the authority where the people had reposed faith through democratic election.

- 9) **Bhuban Pegu:** This TMPK turned legislator reached the height of Mising ethnic sentiments. Although, he was elected on the next assembly election in 2006 Bhuban Pegu had made his presence felt in Assam assembly through his fiery eloquent speech. He exposed on Assam budget and under utilization of central fund by the state government in the winter session in 2009 were his efficient reflections as an independent legislator. He was once a general secretary in the North East India's famed Cotton College defeating Himanta Biswa Sharma, now a powerful cabinet Minister in Assam Government.
- 10) **Taniland:** Towards the end of 2009, a prominent Assamese daily carried the news of Taniland that Mising inhabited area in north bank of eastern Assam will be integrated with Arunachal's Abotani descent tribes Galo and Adi which will be named Taniland. In the event of failure of Sixth Schedule movement, Taniland theory will be a new political test for upcoming Mising leaders which will determine the political future of the Misings.

(Disclaimer: Views expressed in the above article are personal. Any criticisms are welcome)

COLOURFUL ATTIRE OF MISING TRIBE

One of the branches of the Assamese society are the Misings and there are some special characteristics in their dresses. Among the tribes of the north-east, the Mising secures second position in population while the Bodos secures the first. On the other hand, the Mising secure the highest position in making colorful attires. The Mising tribe is expert in weaving for which the colorful dresses made by them possess a special position in Assamese culture. The dresses carry traditional significance of the tribe like the other tribes of Assam

The traditional attires of the Mising ladies are as follows:

- 1) Yakne Age-Gasar (Black Mekhela Sadar)
- 2) Ribi Gaseng (Sadar),
- 3) Gero (Pathali Kapur)
- 4.) Segrog etc.

It may be pointed out that that the black and green are the most favorite colours of the Misings, who have a specific culture of preparing colours from plants. The traditional dresses of the Gents are:

- 1.) Gonro Ugon (Dhuti),
- 2.) Mibi golug (shirt),
- 3.) Dumer (gamocha) etc

The Misings are easy-going, simple living and they are fond of festivals. Their main festival is Ali-Aye-

-**Mg. Vibhas Payeng**

Li'gang. The young boys and girls perform Gumrag (Folk dance and songs) by visiting every household of the village. The girls wear black Ege, Ribi Gaseng and Gero. The Ali – Aye-Li'gang festival falls on the first Wednesday in the month of Fhagun (between January and February) every year. The Ribi Gaseng and Gero are worn by the ladies at the time of their child birth. It is also worn during festivals and rituals.

Culture is not a static identity and keeps changing. Thus, a lot of changes have come into the mising culture too, thanks to the acculturation process. The Misings also wear modern fashionable clothes and the traditional dresses are today limitedly worn only during rituals and festivals.



INTERVIEWS

Misingonline has been involved in conducting a series of interviews with various personalities on diverse issues that have tormented the mising community. Here we publish two interviews. The first interview features Prof. Tabu Taid and the second features Mr. Benjamin Kaman. The interviews were taken by Mg. Manoranjan Pegu on behalf of Misingonline.com. The excerpts of the interviews are as follows:

MR. Benjamin Kaman has recently co-authored a book "Hydrological Gauging of Small watersheds". Born into a middle class teacher family, Mr. Kaman went onto becoming an engineer and is currently serving as working as Soil and Water Conservation Engineer in Krishi Vigyan Kendra (NRCP, ICAR), Goalpara since 2006. A member of various international and national professional societies carries a strong urge of serving the Mising community.

MisingOnline conducted a small electronic interview with Mr. Kaman over the mail. The excerpts of the same are given below.

MO: Tell us more about you and your family?

Kaman: I was born in Dhemaji in 1975 to Mr. Tarun Chandra Kaman (Retired Principal, Dhemaji Higher Secondary School) and Mrs. Binapani Kaman. My wife is Mrs. Minakshi Borah (MSc in Home Science) and now we have a girl child Mrinmoyee.

I completed schooling from Dhemaji Higher Secondary School in 1990 and then obtained Higher Secondary education from Cotton College in 1992. Thereafter I obtained B.E. (Civil Engineering) and M.E. (Civil Engineering with specialization in Watershed Management) from Assam Engineering College, Guwahati in 1996 and 2001 respectively. Professional career began as guest Lecturer in Assam Engineering College, Guwahati for a year (2000-2001) and then worked as Research Associate in Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Umiam, Meghalaya during 2001 to 2006. Presently I am working as Soil and Water Conservation Engineer in Krishi Vigyan Kendra (NRCP, ICAR), Goalpara since 2006. I am a member of several international and national professional societies. I am also coordinating Mising section of XOBD- the only online dictionary of North Eastern Languages.

MO: What is the book "Hydrological Gauging of Small Watersheds" about?

Kaman: Watershed is an area, rain falling over which contributes runoff to a single stream. Watershed Management refers to judicious management of soil, vegetation and water resources for optimized production. Hydrology is the science of water, which is the most vital component for plant and animal life, and for soil conservation and

fertility. Hydrology deals with occurrence, circulation and distribution of water. Investigation of component processes or hydrological gauging is necessary for understating hydrological response of a watershed to climate. The book discusses procedures for gauging various hydrological components of small hilly watersheds. The book provides information on various aspects of hydrological gauging of small hilly watersheds in Indian conditions and post processing operations. The book is expected to guide Engineers, Scientists and Technicians in hydrological measurement and analysis to desired level of accuracy and interpretation at standard norms.

MO: Can you tell us a little bit about your journey on co-authoring this book? How did you end up becoming a part of the book, what researches did you carry out, what were your struggles and difficulties faced during writing the book?

Kaman: Brahmaputra basin covering North East Region is one among the water rich basins in the world. Annual available water potential of the region is 585.60 km³, which is 31.33% of the National potential. Erosion potential is very high in the region because the basin is highly undulating and also experiences heavy annual rainfall of about 5100mm to 6400mm in Arunachal Hills and 2500mm to 5400 mm in Brahmaputra plains. As surface water flow through the region, it carries vast amount of sediment also, which is estimated as 735 Million tonnes per year which is equivalent to 2.01 Million Tonnes of sediment everyday. However micro level hydrological studies are yet to be taken up. Reference or guide book on hydrological gauging is not readily available for micro level hydrological studies. I was working on hydrological studies of small watersheds in ICAR Research Complex for NEH Region, Barapani. During the period of work with Dr. K. K. Satapathy (Head & Principal Investigator, now Director, NIRJAFT (ICAR), Kolkata), we received requests from officials of North Eastern states visiting the institute for various trainings/workshops on the need of a book on hydrological gauging. Various agencies implementing watershed projects find it difficult to report on hydrological status of the watersheds for lack of reference book. Dr. Satapathy suggested that we should compile a book and we started.

MO: How would the book help the people of North-east (Especially Mising people)?

Kaman: Some important features of small watersheds in hills of North East India are steep slopes, high rainfall and high erosion potentiality. It is very important to investigate and estimate these hydrological component processes for any developmental or conservation planning. To study hydrology of small watersheds, basic components to be observed are rainfall, interception, runoff and soil loss. Estimation of the component processes will help in formulating proper conservation measures for reducing peak runoff (thereby reducing flood), reducing soil loss (thereby reducing sediment deposition in riverbeds), and sustainable production. It will not only improve the environmental condition of the hills but also the general improvement of the communities living in foot hills. It is expected that Mising peoples are going to be benefited since the community is being mostly affected in the past few decades.

MO: Is the book written for a limited audience or whole of the common people?

Kaman: The target groups of the book are Engineers, Scientists and Technicians involved in water resource research and development activities in hilly areas. It aims to provide ready reference and technical guidance to these groups of professionals for scientific hydrological gauging of small hilly watersheds.

MO: Tell us about your views on our website www.misingonline.com?

Kaman: I am very much thankful to you for launching the website. I was suggesting Dr. Anil Pegu (of Mising Agom Ke'bang) also on the necessity of such a platform. I wish all of you the best for the future.

MO: Thanks a lot and we wish all the best to you too. It was a pleasure interacting with you.

Kaman: Thanks a lot.

THE NOMENCLATURE QUESTION

One of the most gripping and interesting debates in the Mising community today is about the Nomenclature of the Mising Tribe. There have been various discussions on how the community's name should be spelled. There has been constant exchange of academically rich discussions and letters between the members of the Misingonline team and Mr. Peter Pegu who has been constantly

advocating the use of Spelling 'Mishing'. He of course, has his arguments to back his logic. The Misingonline team had constantly advocated the use of 'Mising' as it believed that with this nomenclature the pride of the Mising community is attached. But we did not want the debate to turn into a exchange of just accusative mails. Thus, we decided to approach **Prof. Tabu Taid**, the renowned scholar of the community with a few questions. The excerpts of the interview are given below:

MO: What is the history behind adoption of 'Mising' as the name of the community?

Prof. Taid: The Mising language does not have a phoneme (=the basic unit of sounds) equivalent to English 'sh', as in 'she', 'shame', etc., as you have very rightly perceived. That is why the MAK (estd. 1972) has been using the spelling MISING uniformly since that time.

MO: What is wrong with being called Miri and why was Mising adopted?

Prof. Taid: Linguists use two terms exonym (name used by non-natives) and autonym (name used by the concerned people themselves'. Whatever the origin (probably for Miri, it is quite clear that MIRI is an exonym, whereas MISING is the autonym. There is nothing objectionable about the word MIRI, particularly if its origin is Miri, but its use in day-to-day life has been vulgarized by irresponsible non-natives. But since we always call ourselves MISING, never MIRI, the former is preferable as the name of the community.

MO: Have there been initiatives taken by the community to change the constitutional spelling of the tribe into Mising from Miri?

Prof Taid: Somebody (who I don't know) took an initiative -- may be in the Assam Secretariat - and amended the name as MICHING (MIRI) appears in the last revision of the constitutional list. The MAK should have been consulted on the matter. As you can see, 'ch' is an attempt at transliterating the Assamese letter 'pratham ch' without taking into account the sound involved. This has added to the confusion. I'll advise MAK to take up the matter urgently.

MO: We would like to know the justification of the Mising Agom Ke'bang behind the adoption of the name of the Mising?

Prof Taid: As already mentioned in the response to the first answer above, the sound concerned is best represented by the roman letter S (s), and not by any other letter.

MO: Also, Mr Peter Pegu (Of Mising society of Mumbai) has been asking for introducing new phonetics with 'sh' Sound in our script. Is it possible? If yes/no then Why?

Prof Taid: He is trying to think of Mising in terms of English. The MAK has adopted a system of

writing taking the system of sounds in Mising, not in English. If you want to talk of the Mising language and the people, you should think in terms of Mising. It is true that J. F. Needham informed non-Misings in writing for the first time (in his SHAIYANG MIRI GRAMMAR) that the Miris call themselves MISING. Lorrain (in his ABOR-MIRI DICTIONARY) followed Needham. And later respected Dr. Numal Pegu followed them. But why should we follow colonial writers blindly? People all over the world, especially scholars, today are trying to break away from the shackles of colonial practices and ways of thinking. If Peter wants to stick to colonial practices, that is his prerogative, but what is objectionable is that he is acting like an extra-constitutional authority in this matter. He cannot be above the apex body of the 12-lakh strong community. Of course, he has a right to his opinion, and so he can always take up the matter with the MAK. Instead, he has been acting as an authority in his own right.

I have discussed the question of MIRI/MISING/MISING/MICHING in some detail

in my introduction to MISING GOMPIR KUMSUNG (A Dictionary of the Mising Language), which has already been printed (binding is going on).

I may also inform you in this connection that Professor James Matisoff of the Linguistics department of California University, Berkeley, brought out a catalogue of Tibeto-Burman languages in the 1970's, where he named our language as MIRI. I wrote to him about the words MIRI as well as MISING, explaining that MIRI is an exonym and the sound of the spelling SH does not occur in Mising. Professor Matisoff promptly responded by using MISING instead of MIRI. The University also published three papers of mine on the Mising language.

MO: Thank you sir

Prof Taid: Thank you and all the best on your initiative

THE TEACHER'S CORNER

Compiled By: Mg. Kyirud Kutum
Orientation to the Mising Language

ENGLISH MONTH MONTH	MISING	ENGLISH	MISING
1.) FEBRUARY	GIMMUR	1.) MONDAY	AKON
2.) MARCH	GALL'NG	2.) TUESDAY	UYU
3.) APRIL	KOMBONG	3.) WEDNESSDAY	LI'GANG
4.) MAY	I'YONG	4.) THURSDAY	ABU
5.) JUNE	TANYI'R	5.) FRIDAY	RU:TUM
6.) JULY	YILE'	6.) SATURDAY	RU:NYI:
7.) AUGUST	LOBO	7.) SUNDAY	DONYI:
8.) SEPTEMBER	ITE'		
9.) OCTOBER	DI'SANG		
10.) NOVEMBER	PE':RE'M		
11.) DECEMBER	KI'JI'R		
12.) JANUARY	BI'RSANG		

The Poetry Section

JÉ:ROPLAI

-Mg. Bhiageswar pagag

Kajé ajona
 Ngok réngam sém
 Jé:roplai,
 Duroptok duroptok éna.
 Do:nyi awwa
 Po:lo awwa
 Aíem ansi:né awwé
 Émna lusula du:yoka.
 Nokké birmé-bíro
 Narjari-sorgiyari bulu
 Pa:pénamém pa:to:bong.
 Ngolu !
 Sa:yang Mo:ying
 Délu-Pagro
 Oyan-Dambuk
 Somuwang-samuguriya
 Émna luker kerra
 Du:dolo
 Dakorém
 Andéng andé:pé
 Koryutsudung.
 Ajona,
 No bulum
 Jé:la lubitok
 Lérékpé gilentoka éna,
 Muglíng-Yariém
 Pésoyoka
 Yummi-yuptabém
 Mépaktoka
 Opínsok légapé
 Anu mimag ko
 Anu yummanško
 Ka:polai
 Kajé bulum
 Jéroplai.

BULLU TAPADÉ (They are Leeches)

-Mg. Bhaigeswar Pagag

Bulu Tapadé
 Le:né i:yyém
 Mu:datsuné.
 Bulu kinbimang
 Le:né miksi dínamém.
 Sé:ko kangkin biyené !
 Sé opan panné
 Lédu mokutsuné
 Réngamsok ngasodém !
 Bulu témpí Tapadé
 Ami i:yyém
 Tí:la turné.
 Mung-gabnamdém
 Mungke:pé émna mu:né.
 Buluké kungke dégom
 Bottadak
 Séko karpak la:yé:né ?
 Opan-panné opínsok
 Lotta do
 Tangngoko imatakamém
 A:patkumang
 Tangngo me:lamém
 Késu miksi díla
 Lotta lottalo
 Gíla togésudak
 Gasumko agerém
 Émpigela,
 Longkabo gíné
 Takamdéi RABO:NÉ.
 Kindon ?
 Bulu mudatsuné
 Tapadé
 Réngam mitpansuné.

AAMI AXOMIYA

-*Mg. Abutani Pegu*

The Prime Minister's office recently asked the Assam government to define the term 'Assamese'. This was in response to the All Assam Students Union's (AASU) demand for tripartite talks, involving the AASU, the Government of India (GOI) and the Assam government on the implementation of the accord which was signed between the Centre and the leaders of the famous Assam Agitation of late Seventies and early Eighties. The movement brought to attention issues such as large scale illegal immigration from Bangladesh and threat to the indigenous population of Assam. The agitation continued for six long years and forced the Centre to enter into an agreement with the leaders of the movement. The movement gave birth to the Asom Gana Parishad. It polarised the political forces in a manner that the one party domination that had prevailed in Assam politics came to an end. One of the most important aspects of the accord was a series of concessions offered to the community that supported the movement. The slogans of the movement, the speeches of the leaders and the affiliation of the most prominent leaders left no one in doubt that the movement's supreme aim was to protect the interest of the Asomiya, the Assamese-speaking community of Assam. The Assamese-speaking middle class leaders of the movement took it for granted that the non-Assamese speaking indigenous smaller communities would at one level identify themselves with the Asomiya. But sadly, the history of ethnic clashes in Assam and the other north eastern states proved otherwise. The various ethnic clashes brought to light the actual intentions of the leaders of the movement. It was a blatant attempt by the educated elite to monopolise petty trade, corner government jobs and ultimately establish hegemony over the entire area often claimed to be the homeland of the community concerned and directly related to the assertion of ethnic identity. The question of Assamese identity has always been a political conundrum. They themselves began asserting their identity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century through organisations like the Asomiya Bhasha Unnati Sadhini Sabha, Jorhat Sarbajanik Sabha and later through Asom Chatra Sanmilan and Asam Sahitya Sabha. It was a battle for securing government jobs, dominating small trade and snatching agricultural land from Bengali migrants. This aspect of Assamese-Bengali conflict is too well known and does not require elaboration. Research on Jorhat Sarbajanik Sabha and analyses of the politics of the founders of some of the organisations mentioned above have clearly brought out the sense of

insecurity felt by the emerging Asomiya educated elite who fought against the attempt to introduce Bengali as the language of schools and offices. They felt threatened by near total monopoly of educated Bengalis over the government jobs under early British rule in Assam. The shadow of this insecurity is seen in the Asomiya fierce fight against the attempts to introduce Bengali as the official language. The demand for recognition of Assamese as the official language and medium of instruction galvanised the process of assertion of Asomiya identity. There is no doubt that the Asomiya middle class used linguistic identity as a means of gaining political mileage. And the strategy paid off. This is not to argue that there is no genuine love of the language (bhasha prem) among the Assamese. The average Asomiya, like members of any other community, loves his language because it is his medium of expression, his mode of communication. But at the same time, it provides a powerful means of uniting people and therefore, the most tempting political weapon. Linguistic identity is the most prominent identity for most ethnic communities. It is but natural that language based ethnicity has become a weapon of competitive politics for the relatively backward communities. In his book *'Ethnic Conflicts, Tribal Politics A Global Perspective'*, Kenneth Christie brings home the same point. In a region with few opportunities for productive employment, educated elites of all communities will no doubt try to influence government policies in their favour. And they do so by raging ethnic war. Such fights for cultural identity is often being carried out by students and youth organisations of deprived communities. The demands of the organisations like the AASU, the Khasi Students Union, the Karbi Students Union and the All Bodo Students Union point to this very clearly. AASU's call for protecting the interests of the Assamese community should be understood only by placing it in the right perspective. The reference is obviously to the Assamese-speaking community because the members of this community are the main supporters of the AASU and the agitation it has led for six long years. Therefore, the definition of Assamese sought by the Centre in the context of discussions on Assam accord is not difficult to understand. However, the issue is not that simple anymore. At some point of time, AASU and other Asomiya regional forces could speak of Bor Asom (greater Assam) to include other small communities of the state. But with the emergence of strong community-based organisations among smaller communities, the task becomes more complicated. At present it is imperative for the AASU to redefine Assamese by taking in the aspirations of indigenous residents of Assam. But the concept of indigenous in the context of Assam is a contested one. A section of the Bodos, for instance, do not accept the tea tribes living in the areas claimed as Bodo homeland as indigenous. A section of the Asomiyas refuse to accept the Muslim

population in the chars of Brahmaputra as indigenous. Such problems are abundant. But politically, it is not possible to leave such people out of the definition of Assamese when the term is used to ask for protective discrimination. AASU and certain sections of the Asomiya middle class have of late been showing signs of tolerance and maturity in accepting the claims of smaller identities and minorities as justified. These organisations, therefore, must take the lead to identify the communities that would be covered by the term Assamese for this specific purpose of protective discrimination. Such an effort will rake up the issue of the cut-off date and length of residence to determine indignity. However it is not possible to avoid the issue any longer. The need of the hour is to call for a convention of leaders and organisations of all significant communities living in Assam along with tolerant sections of the intelligentsia in the state to arrive at an acceptable cut-off date. Impractical assertions will only create more ethnic violence, converting Assam into another Bosnia.

(Abutani Pegu is based in Bangalore and is pursuing his higher studies)

UP IN SMOKE

- Mg. Bhaskar (Zephyretta) Pegu

I don't know how long I will live. But, when a research study tells me that my daily average intake of the cigarettes will reduce 14.5 years of my life, I realize that I have not been smoking; instead, like the stick in my hand, I have been burning myself far sooner than the time assigned to turn my body to ash. But apart from a chill and an occasional shudder, I haven't been scared. Never enough to chuck the habit though God knows I have tried.

From the time I started 8 years ago, I have heard of and ignored those ominous warning: smoking is injurious to health. 'Smoking leads to cancer'. 'Smoking kills'. But all those fearsome alarms fell on deaf ears and couldn't dissuade me from smoking. One side-effect of smoking no one talks about is that it lead to a thick hide, numbness and a false sense of bravado. Nicotine and tar make fools of reasonably sensible person. Not all smokers die of cancer and not all who die of cancer smoked, we argue.

What's the big deal?

Here's the big deal:

Smoking debilitates. It increases anxiety, depression, and risk of cataract, premature wrinkling and ageing. It affects the unborn child in

pregnant woman. And more: Tobacco is the world's leading cause of preventable death, responsible for 5.4 million deaths every year, according to the WHO. Lifetime smokers run a 50 percent chance of dying of smoke-related ailments. And no, smoking less than five cigarettes a day do not reduce chances of developing cancer and other diseases. Smoking even one or two cigarettes a day can cause cancer of the lung, throat, bladder, cervix and larynx.

One man had the wisdom to sense that it is a big deal: the union minister of health. When he tried to ban smoking in films, there were disgruntled voices that he was impinging on the right of the film industry because it is a soft target. When he tried to tell stars like SRK to quit smoking in public, Khan defied it openly. But when push fails, the government shoves. After polite warnings come a cropper, it was time to take strict punitive action. Exactly what the Union Ministry of Health has done. From October 2, smoking has been banned in all public places-office building, small cafes, restaurants, schools, pubs, discotheque, stadium, airports and bus stands (its allowed in perks and roads).

Why am I, a seasoned smoker, rejoicing at the news? Because I am weak (only weak people turn to substance abuse). Substance abuse, in turns, makes them weaker. Once the addiction sets in, most attempts at extricating oneself fail.

We Indians believe in rocket science: unless our bottoms are on fire, we don't propel into movements. A ban enforced upon us might just be what we needed to chuck the fatal habit.

UNITY AND DIVERSITY IN INDIA

-Mg. Uttam Pegu

Few years back, while my American client came to India, we went to Goa. After few glasses of Fanny in the morning itself, both of us had terrible headache. At around 1 AM, both of us went out of our hotel rooms, looking for some medicine to kill our headache.

At around 2 AM, whole Goa was seemed totally deserted! All shops were closed, no one to ask for direction or availability of Medical Store. Not a single soul was visible anywhere!.... At last I saw one Goan looking person loitering on road and stopped our car! I got out of the car and asked the man in Hindi! He did not answer and looked puzzled. I tried in English. He again looked blank and uttered some language which seemed Hebrew to me!

Desperate to ask about direction or medicine, I tried Some Bengali/Marathi/Gujarati (I don't know what language myself) along with some sign languages! No, the poor chap did not understand me and I moved back in the car!

After seeing my endeavour and failure to communicate with that Goan man, my American friend exclaimed! "Man, you look Asian, and this is India, you are an Indian, that guy is another Indian, and being in same country and countrymen, both of you could not communicate in any language!"..... I realized how diverse we Indians are!

Few years passed, I moved to Jaipur along with my family took flat on rent. The tap in the kitchen sink had some leakage and some drops were falling continuously. My wife started nagging me to get it fixed and ask me to talk to owner. After few days I had to call up the owner and informed about the leaking tap. Being a nice guy, he came to my flat and inspected the tap and the sink. I complained him that the leakage must be stopped as it is not supposed to be a good sign for a family! (I was reluctant to tell him the exact reason my wife explained me about leakage in the tap). He replied:

"Yes, here in Rajasthan, we believe if any tap is leaking, it causes the family unnecessary expenditure!" I was stunned! It was the exact reason explained to me by my wife! And I realised how united we Indians are.

MISING SOCIO-POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS

-Compiled by Mg. Bhaskar Gupid

The following are the names of Mishing social/political organisation

- Takam Mising Porin Kébang(All Mishing Students' Union)
- TMMK-Takam Mising Mimé Kébang(All Mishing Women Association)
- MBK-Mising Ba:né Kébang(Mishing Peoples' Conference)
- MDK-Mising Dírbí Kébang(Mishing Cultural Association)
- MAK-Mising Agom Kébang(Mishing Literary Association)
- MAC-Mishing Autonomous Council
- MMK-Mising Mimag Kébang(Mishing Action Committee)
- AGMK-All Guwahati Mishing Kébang

A REALITY JOKE

-Mg. Uttam pegu

A Mising person in Dhemaji decided to build a RCC building for himself after he got money from his road contract. He had a truck. He went to River Brahmaputra and filled up his truck with sand and drove back. Some forest official stopped his truck and explained that he cannot take sand just like that. He did not listen to them and kept ferrying sand.

The forest official filed a case against him in the Dhemaji court.

Judge: Why did you take sand?

Mising man: The sand was lying there, so I took for building my house.

Judge: Have you taken permission?

Mising man: No. I did not find any owner of the sand to take permission.

Judge: Assam Government is the owner of the sand. You must take permission from them and pay tax for taking anything from Brahmaputra.

Mising Man: Good. So, who owns Brahmaputra?

Judge: Assam Government.

Mising Man: Does it own the sand too?

Judge: Yes, of course.

Mising Man: Does it own the water in Brahmaputra?

Judge: Yes, of course, Government is the owner of Brahmaputra including its sand and water.

Mising Man: Thank you, Judge Sir. I had been looking for the owner of the water of Brahmaputra for years now.

The water always come to fields and destroys my paddy and it has been happening year after year. Now that I found the owner, please take up my case and get me my damages for my paddy for last 20 years. I will happily pay for sand to him then.

Case was dismissed.

Picture Gallery



Pic. 1: Mising Gumrag Soman (Traditional Dance), By Mg. Kyirud Kutum



Pic 2: Preparation of Poro Apong (Rice Beer). Picture By Nitin



Pic no. 3: Josag Apin (food generally eaten in Rituals), By Mm. Jyotismita Taye



Pic No 4: A tradition Mising House (Chang Ghar), Picture by: Mg. Abutani Pegu



Pic No 5: Dobur ritual (A community ritual done for the well being of the entire village), By Mg. Manoranjana pegu



Pic No. 6: Mising women are expert weavers and can create dreams on the looms, Pic By Mg. Uttam Pegu

The MisingOnline team



The Founder member of the MisingOnline.com. A software engineer by profession, he also is a pro blogger and is mostly based in the cities of Udaipur, Bhubaneswar, Mumbai, Jaipur and Delhi. He pursues active interest in the issues of the mising community and constantly writes about them in his blogs. He can be reached at uttampegu@gmail.com.

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A final note from one of the Administrators.....

It's been nearly two years when misingonline.com was first launched without much buzz. Today, we are entering into the second year and I must admit it has been a pleasant journey so far. As you know, misingOnline is the first social networking forum of the Mising community and over the couple of years it has grown bigger and bigger. In a nutshell, misingonline.com has been successful enough to create a new online identity of the Mising Community amidst the global community. As the tagline of misingonline.com says "Connecting Misings Worldwide", I believe that misingonline.com has been able to connect and touch the souls of many Misings through this World Wide Web medium.

I'm fortunate enough to be a part of the administrative team of misingonline.com and it's really a great feeling to see the plant planted two years back bearing flowers now. We have done everything to make the site more user friendly with the addition of many new features. Our job doesn't end here. Now, we are working even harder to make the site more beautiful.

I am really thankful to all the folks who have joined the forum and made some noise in one way or the other. Let's keep this momentum going.

Congratulations to all of you for making this day happen

***Best wishes to all.
Pranab Doley***

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